

# Minutes of the SC NRCS Civil Rights Advisory Committee

## 10:00 AM April 4, 2007

### Members/Advisors Present

Lynette Savereno-Chairperson & MAL (Member at Large)

Sabrenna Bryant-Vice-Chairperson & MAL

Cliff Eaddy-Treasurer & AIANPM

Charlie Ogg-Secretary & MAL

LaKeisha Hill- BEPM

Rafael Mendez-HEPM

Craig Ellis-Title VI Advisor

Dory Reeves-Title VII Advisor

Amy Maxwell-Outreach Advisor & 1890's Liaison Advisor

### Members/Advisors Absent

Lisa Good-FWPM

Wayne Henderson-DEPM

- I. Call to Order. Eaddy called the Civil Rights Committee (CRC) meeting to order at 10:15 AM. Chairperson Savereno arrived late to the meeting because of a conflicting RC & D commitment and asked Eaddy to start without her.
- II. Approval of minutes. Ogg made a motion to approve the minutes from the February 2007 meeting. Hill seconded the motion. Motion passed.
- III. Budget Report. Eaddy submitted the FY07 CRC budget for everyone to review. He requested all those who need to submit their expenses to do so. He referenced an email from Frank Wilcox indicating when committee members report expenses on travel vouchers to be sure to note them as "Civil Rights Committee expenditures."
- IV. Ongoing activities with approaching deadlines.
  - a. *Current Development Articles.* May is Asian Pacific Islander Month and the article submission deadline is March 30<sup>th</sup>.
  - b. *Training for members.* Bryant, Good, and Hill will attend the new member training at Atlanta. Mendez will attend SEPM training in May. Hill may also attend SEPM training.
  - c. *Civil Rights Reviews & Reports.* The East Piedmont RC&D office review was cancelled and has yet to be rescheduled. Mendez, rather than Eaddy, will represent the CRC at the Lancaster FO review on September 12, 2007.
  - d. *Plan of Work.* Savereno submitted the FY07 CRC Plan of Work saying it is approved and signed by Mr. Douglas. She solicited updates from CRC members for completed items; several members responded. Savereno asked members to send completed items to her and she will update the plan electronically.

- e. *SC Civil Rights Committee website.* Bryant presented the updated CRC website, found at [http://www.sc.nrcs.usda.gov/civil\\_rights.html](http://www.sc.nrcs.usda.gov/civil_rights.html). Savereno commended Bryant as well as others involved in the website construction for “a fantastic job!” There was some discussion about adding anonymous comments from previous Civil Rights reviews for agency personnel to review. This will help other offices prepare for reviews and ensure they have their files in order and the appropriate documentation in place. These comments should be used in association with the Outreach Fact Sheet ([http://www.sc.nrcs.usda.gov/Outreach\\_liaison.html](http://www.sc.nrcs.usda.gov/Outreach_liaison.html)). Minutes from Civil Rights Committee meetings will also be posted on the website, and minutes will no longer be emailed to all offices.
- V. AIANPM Report. Eaddy notified the CRC that Gina Bass, FSA Outreach Liaison for American Indians in the Southeast, attended the small group meeting at Newberry. She also participated in the February Southeast workgroup teleconference. Eaddy also submitted a news article announcing the resignation of Chief Gilbert Blue as Chief of the Catawba Indian Nation.
- VI. BEPM Report. Hill reported the participation results and comments from the trivia questions she provided via email during Black Emphasis month.
- VII. DEPM Report. No report.
- VIII. FWPM Report. No report.
- IX. HEPM/APIPM Report. No report.
- X. MAL Report. No report.
- XI. Outreach Report. Maxwell notified the CRC of her additional duties as Outreach Advisor and 1890’s Liaison. She hopes to work along with Small Farmer Liaison Wilfred Pace to revitalize the NRCS partnership with South Carolina State University. Maxwell reported on two successful Small/Minority Farmer Forestry workshops in the Lowcountry and in Orangeburg, co-sponsored by NRCS.

Reeves and Maxwell gave an update on the Savannah River Environmental Sciences Field Station, of which NRCS is a founding partner. The project, which has been dormant in recent years, is in the stages of revitalization. The purpose is to provide hands-on, field-oriented experiences for students from regional Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) and Minority Institutions (MI). The project compliments undergraduate programs that utilize math and science principles to solve complex real-life problems in agriculture, environmental science, natural resource management, and engineering by using the faculty expertise available at the HBCU’S. More updates will follow as plans expand to revitalize this program.

- XII. Title VI Report. Ellis reported the race and gender analyses for applicants and approved contract funding for WHIP and EQIP.
- XIII. Title VII Report. Reeves is working to complete the Affirmative Employment Report for headquarters. She requested two volunteers to review and comment on the report before she submits it. Hill and Maxwell volunteered to

help. Reeves also requested input into how Human Resources can identify why new employees resign from NRCS. Human Resources also needs to identify strategies for retaining new employees.

- XIV. Cultural Awareness Training. Bryant reported August 23 is the scheduled date for Cultural Awareness Training. The CAT committee toured a potential site in the Columbia area. Banquet facilities are adequate and costs for renting the facilities are reasonable. The agenda is still open. Speakers are being sought. The tentative theme is *Celebrating Cultural Differences: Acknowledging Their Value*.
- XV. Other Business. Savereno solicited nominations for the 2007 SC Civil Rights Award. Several nominations were taken for submission to Mr. Douglas.
- XVI. Next Meeting. **The next meeting of the CRC is 10:00 AM June 13<sup>th</sup> 2007.**
- XVII. Adjourn. Savereno called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Bryant made the motion to adjourn. Eaddy seconded. Motion passed. The CRC adjourned at 12:25 PM.